

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

**Work values and volunteers: an investigation into the work values of
New Zealand volunteer firefighters.**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

In

Psychology

at Massey University, Manawatu, New Zealand

Caroline Maree Stark

2017

Abstract

Declining populations in smaller rural areas in New Zealand over the past 30 years have resulted in significant reductions in many services and an increased reliance on volunteer labour to provide these services. New Zealand firefighters are predominately volunteers, with approximately 85% belonging to volunteer brigades. The cost of training these volunteers is significant and retention of volunteers is an issue for many brigades. By measuring the importance of work values of firefighters and the level that these values being are met by the firefighting organisations they belong to, this research is endeavouring to investigate person-organisation (P-O) fit via the needs-supplies framework. The Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) looks at P-O fit and how higher levels of fit result in increased satisfaction with ones' work environment. Satisfaction is theorised to lead to longer tenure. This research measured the work values of 178 volunteer firefighters throughout New Zealand. Results indicated that overall there was good P-O fit between individual and organisational values. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was carried out on individual and organisational value items in an effort to compare these to the six-factor structure of Elizur's (1984) work. This analysis found resulted in a three-factor structure for individual values and a different three-factor structure for organisational values, suggesting that work values among volunteers may be somewhat different from those in the paid workforce, although this issue needs to be explored further. Higher satisfaction was related to the individual work value factors of pride and self-development and the organisational work values factors of work environment, recognition and pride. EFA was also conducted on the mean value differences between individual and organisational values, and revealed five factors. All factors: work environment, self-development, self-esteem, power and pride, were correlated with increased satisfaction while self-development, power and pride were correlated with lower intentions to leave. Future areas of research are suggested to improve understanding in this field and to assist brigades to retain existing firefighters.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Dianne Gardner for her extreme patience and astounding knowledge in the field of work values. The enthusiasm you showed for this project and the fast turnaround of editing enabled me to carry on without any delay. Your never-ending encouragement helped me finally get over the finish line and without it I fear I would have thrown in the towel. Thankyou!

Secondly, I would like to thank Susan Todd; Lead Advisor Workforce, Volunteer and Service Resilience Strategy, New Zealand Fire Service, for her assistance in getting this research project off the ground, Lorelee Hyde, Communications & Marketing Manager, United Fire Brigades Association for jumping on board with the distribution of the online survey to volunteers, and the board members of the New Zealand Fire Service and United Fire Brigades Association for permission to contact the volunteers through their services.

Thirdly I would like to thank my family, whom without their support, I would have never come this far. Assistance with everything from proof-reading to supplying me with food when I was too busy to stop, your help has been invaluable.

Fourth, a big thankyou to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee for giving me the time to explain my submission in person and providing me with helpful and thought provoking feedback. Thanks for letting me take up your precious time.

Finally, I would like to thank all the volunteer firefighters of New Zealand. Many great years were spent as a volunteer myself and the friendships that were made are lifelong. You are underappreciated by most, overworked by many and wouldn't have it any other way. Keep up the awesome work.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Chapter 1 Volunteering.....	8
Why individuals volunteer	9
Benefits of Volunteering.....	12
Detriments of Volunteering	13
Volunteering in New Zealand.....	14
Chapter 2 Firefighting.....	15
History of New Zealand Firefighters	15
Major fires.....	16
Legislation.....	19
Training & Equipment	20
New Zealand Fire Service.....	22
Community Awareness and Education	23
Firefighting in New Zealand	24
Career Firefighters	25
Volunteer Firefighters	26
Retention of Volunteer Firefighters	27
The current research.....	28
Chapter 3 Values and Work Values	30
Values	30
Work values	32
Classifying work values.....	34
Chapter 4 Person-Environment Fit	37
Person-Environment Fit	37
What is 'fit'?	37
Fit to what?	38

How much fit?.....	39
Chapter 5 The Theory of Work Adjustment	40
Introduction.....	40
Research on the Theory of Work Adjustment	41
Age, Gender, Tenure and Person-Organisation Correspondence	43
Summary	44
The current research.....	44
Chapter 6 Methods	45
Procedure	45
Participants.....	45
Measures	46
Work Values	46
Elizur (1984) Work Values Questionnaire.	47
Lyons (2003) Work Values Survey.	47
The final scale.....	47
Person-Organisation Values Fit	48
Satisfaction.....	48
Future as a Firefighter	49
Data Analysis	49
Chapter 7 Results	51
Individual and Organisational Values.....	51
Exploratory Factor Analysis	55
Individual factors	55
Organisational Factors	56
Bivariate correlations.....	56
Exploratory Factor Analysis – Individual and Organisational Mean Differences.....	59
Chapter 8 Discussion	61

Work Values.	61
Factor Analysis	62
Individual factors.	63
Organisational Factors	64
P-O Fit.....	65
Satisfaction and Intentions to leave.	66
Limitations of this Research	66
Future Research	67
Conclusion	67
References	68
Appendices.....	76
Appendix A.....	76
Appendix B	78
Appendix C	81
Appendix D.....	82
Appendix E	83

List of Figures

Figure 1 Seacliff Mental Hospital, Dunedin, pictured before the fire that destroyed it in 1942. Picture courtesy of Te Ara, Wellington.	16
Figure 2 Seacliff Mental Hospital, Dunedin, pictured after the fire in 1942. Picture courtesy of Te Ara, Wellington	17
Figure 3. Members of the Whanganui fire brigade pose with their Merryweather fire engine (right) and a modified Model T Ford, in 1919. Used with permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library, F. J. Denton Collection. Reference: 1/1-020869; F. Photograph by Frank J. Denton	21
Figure 4. 1971 Darley International Snorkel (Type 5) fire appliance. Photo courtesy of The Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT).....	22
Figure 5. Fire Service Regions.....	25
Figure 6: Flowchart of the Theory of Work Adjustment. Adapted from "A Psychological Theory of Work Adjustment", " by R. V. Dawis & L. H. Lofquist, 1984.....	41
Figure 7. Comparison of Individual and Organisational Value Means	53
Figure 8. Difference between Individual and Organisational Mean values.....	55

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant demographics.....	46
Table 2. Mean Individual-Organisational Value Differences.....	52
Table 3. Mean differences of values	54
Table 4. Bivariate Correlations	58
Table 5. Correlations of Mean Difference Factors	60